

- **Rest and fluids:** Make sure your child gets plenty of rest and drinks clear fluids (water, broth, sports drinks, electrolyte beverages for infants such as Pedialyte®) to keep from becoming dehydrated.

- **Medicines:** Ask your doctor about fever-reducing medicines based on your child's age.

Children younger than 4 years of age should not be given over-the-counter cold medicines without approval from a health care provider.

Do not give aspirin to any child younger than 18 years old who has the flu. Use of aspirin in children can cause a rare but serious illness called Reye's syndrome.

Learn more at

<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/homecare/medsafetychildren.htm>.

Preventing others from getting sick

- **Covering coughs:** Make sure that your child covers coughs and sneezes with a tissue and throws the tissue away or coughs or sneezes into their elbow.

- **Sick room:** Keep your sick child in a separate room (sick room) in the house. Limit, as much as possible, the sick child's contact with other members of the house who are not sick.



Make one person in the house the main caregiver for the sick child.

- **Protect pregnant women:** Pregnant women should get a flu vaccine during flu season. If possible pregnant women should not be the main caregiver of a child with the flu.

When can my child go back to school after being sick?

- Your child should stay home for at least 24 hours *after* the fever is gone.
- The fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine, such as Tylenol®.

- A fever is defined as a body temperature of 100° F/37.8° C or greater.

Is the flu vaccine safe for my child with chronic health conditions?

Yes. Flu vaccines are approved for use in children aged 6 months and older, including healthy children and children with chronic health problems. Children younger than 2 years old and children with chronic health problems *should not* get the nasal spray vaccine.

If your child has a chronic health condition, take him to get a flu vaccine. He is at high risk for flu related complications.

What types of flu vaccine should my child receive and how many doses?

Children with chronic health conditions should get the flu vaccine only. Children younger than 9 years old may need 2 doses of the flu vaccine if they have not received the flu vaccine before. Talk with your doctor to discuss how many doses your child needs to be protected.

How can I plan ahead with my child's school or child care?

Find out the plan for flu season for your child's school or child care provider. Let them know your child is at high-risk for flu-related complications.

For more information, visit
www.cdc.gov/flu
or call
1-800-CDC-INFO

Protecting My Child from Flu:



A guide for parents of infants, children or adolescents with chronic health conditions



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

CDC recommends that all children aged 6 months and older, especially those with long-term chronic health conditions, get a flu vaccine every year.

What is flu?

Influenza (flu) is a respiratory disease of the nose, throat and sometimes lungs caused by flu viruses. It can cause mild to severe illness, and at times, can lead to hospital stays and even death.

Is my child at risk?

Children younger than 5 years, but especially children younger than 2 years old, and children and adolescents with certain chronic health conditions are at greater risk for getting seriously ill if they get the flu.

The best way to prevent the flu is to get a flu vaccine each season. Talk with a doctor about the flu vaccine.

How do I know if my child is at greater risk for flu-related complications?

Your child is at greater risk of getting seriously ill from the flu if he or she has certain underlying chronic health conditions or is younger than 5 years old. A chronic health condition is a condition that continues for a long period of time or comes back over and over again.



Some examples are:

- **Neurological and neurodevelopmental conditions** including: disorders of the brain, spinal cord, cerebral palsy, epilepsy (seizure disorders), stroke, intellectual disability (mental retardation), developmental delay, muscular dystrophy, and spinal cord injury
- **Asthma and other chronic lung diseases** (such as cystic fibrosis, bronchopulmonary dysplasia, etc.)

- **Heart disease** (such as congenital heart disease and congestive heart failure)

Learn more about high risk conditions at www.cdc.gov/flu/homecare/medsafetychildren.htm.

What are signs and symptoms of flu?

Signs and symptoms of the flu can include:

fever	headache
cough	chills
sore throat	fatigue
runny or stuffy nose	vomiting and diarrhea (sometimes)
body aches	

Some people with flu will not have a fever, especially people with weakened immune systems. Flu symptoms can be similar to those of a common cold, but the flu is more serious. It is very important to take your child to the doctor if he or she has flu signs and symptoms.



What is a flu complication?

Most people who get the flu will fully recover in **1 to 2 weeks or less**, but some people will develop complications that can be life-threatening and result in death. Examples of flu complications include pneumonia, croup, bronchiolitis, bronchitis, and sinus and ear infections.

How can I protect my child against the flu?

- **Flu Vaccines:** The best way to prevent flu is for you and your child to get a flu vaccine every year. Children younger than 6 months old are at high risk of serious flu illness, but are too young to be vaccinated. People who care for them should be vaccinated to protect them.
- **Distance:** You and your child should avoid close contact with people who are sick.

- **Take action to help control the spread of germs (like flu):** Your child should cover their nose and mouth with a tissue when they cough or sneeze. Then throw the tissue in the trash. If they don't have a tissue, they should cough or sneeze into their upper sleeve or elbow, not their hands.

Wash hands often with soap and running water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub. Help your child with hand washing if needed.

Encourage your child to avoid touching their eyes, nose, and mouth. Germs spread this way.

- **Health:** Make sure that your child's chronic health condition is under the best medical control possible.
- **Plan:** Have a plan for how to take care of your child in case they become sick with the flu.

There is no evidence that environmental condition like cold weather or rain causes flu. Overdressing your child is not a method of protection against flu.

What should I do if my child gets sick?

Treating your child

- **Doctor:** Call or take your child to the doctor right away if your child develops fever or flu symptoms. The doctor may want to begin treatment with influenza antiviral drugs as quickly as possible. Antiviral drugs are prescription medicines that fight against the flu. These medications work best when started as early as possible after getting fever and flu symptoms.
- **Home care:** Keep your child at home, except for doctor visits, for at least 24 hours after their fever is gone. The fever should be gone without the use of fever medications. Monitor your child closely since serious complications of the flu can develop very fast.

